

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 6263

EXDIS

FOR UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID

SUBJECT: MARWAN'S COMMENTS ON SAUDI AID

REF JIDDA 4531

1. QUITE COINCIDENTALLY, I FOUND MYSELF ON THE SAME AIRCRAFT AS ASHRAF MARWAN ENROUTE FROM LONDON TO CAIRO LAST SUNDAY. MARWAN, AS YOU MAY KNOW, IS PRESIDENT SADAT'S SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL CONTACTS, AND WAS VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN ARRANGING THE \$600 MILLION SAUDI LOAN.

2. MARWAN BROACHED THE SUBJECT OF USG TRYING, AS HE PUT IT, "TO TAKE CREDIT FOR THE SAUDI LOAN." OOAT THIS WAS SO. THE SAUDI LOAN HAD BEEN UNDER NEGOTIATIONS LONG BEFORE WE HAD AGREED TO EMERGENCY RELIEF ASSISTANCE. AS PRESIDENT SADAT HAD TOLD US, ARAB FINANCIAL AID -- INCLUDING SAUDI -- WAS TO BE HANDLED AS SEPARATE MATTER FROM THE AID WE ARE ORGANIZING. KING KHALED, PRINCE FAHD AND KAMEL ADHAM, MARWAN CLAIMED, HAD ALL MADE IT CLEAR TO HIM THAT SAUDI FINANCIAL HELP WAS BEING GIVEN AS A DIRECT SAUDI CONTRIBUTION TO EGYPT AND NOT RPT NO BECAUSE OF US URGING. MARWAN SHOWED SOME
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CAIRO 06263 250949Z

PIQUE AT WHAT HE VIEWS AS A US EFFORT TO TAKE CREDIT

FOR IT.

3. I TOLD MARWAN THAT THE ISSUE WAS NOT ONE OF TRYING TO TAKE CREDIT, ALTHOUGH HE SHOULD KNOW THAT UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON HAS SEVERAL TIMES DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH SENIOR SAUDI OFFICIALS. THE LATTER HAD INDICATED THEIR GRATIFICATION AT USG WILLINGNESS TO TRY TO HELP EGYPT BY ORGANIZING MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE AND HAD SPECIFICALLY ACCEPTED OUR CORE CONCEPT OF SAUDI-US-IRANIAN ASSISTANCE. AT SALZBURG PRESIDENT SADAT, WHILE INDICATING HIS WISH TO KEEP ARAB AID SEPARATE FROM OTHER AID, HAD ALSO AGREED TO MAINTAIN THE THREE-STATE CORE CONCEPT AS AN ATTRACTION TO OTHERS. THE PRESIDENT HAD AGREED THAT A PORTION OF THE SAUDI FINANCIAL HELP MIGHT BE CONSIDERED IN THIS CONTEXT. WITHOUT DETRACTING FROM GOE AND SPECIFICALLY MARWAN'S EFFORTS TO SOLICIT SAUDI AID, I HOPED GOE ALSO APPRECIATED ROLE WE ARE PLAYING IN SEEKING TO DRUM UP AS WIDESPREAD MULTILATERAL EMERGENCY RELIEF ASSISTANCE FOR EGYPT AS POSSIBLE. MARWAN SOUGHT TO DOWNPLAY US ASSISTANCE, BUT DROPPED THE POINT WHEN I REMINDED HIM THAT THIS WAS NOT THE VIEW EXPRESSED BY PRESIDENT SADAT.

4. COMMENT: MARWAN'S STATEMENT IS PROBABLY A TRUE REFLECTION OF EGYPTIAN THINKING. WHILE SADAT AND OTHERS ARE WILLING TO PAY LIP SERVICE TO OUR HAVING APPROACHED THE SAUDIS, THEY DO NOT CONSIDER THE US AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOST RECENT SAUDI LOAN. ABU ISMAIL, OF COURSE, IS NOW TALKING ABOUT OUR SOLICITING AN ADDITIONAL \$250 MILLION FROM THE SAUDIS OVER AND ABOVE THEIR PROJECTED \$600 MILLION LOAN AND DOING SO IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR THREE-STATE CORE CONCEPT. THIS IS A CHANGE FROM HIS EARLIER ACQUIESCENCE THAT A PORTION OF THE \$600 MILLION SAUDI LOAN MIGHT BE CONSIDERED IN THE CORE CONCEPT. I DOUBT THAT HE REALLY EXPECTS THAT AN ADDITIONAL INCREMENT WILL BE OBTAINED, BUT AS FINMINISTER HE WANTS

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 06263 250949Z

TO LOSE NO OPPORTUNITY TO TRY TO GET ADDITIONAL FUNDING.
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